

Finding and Supporting Volunteers for your County Gardens Trust

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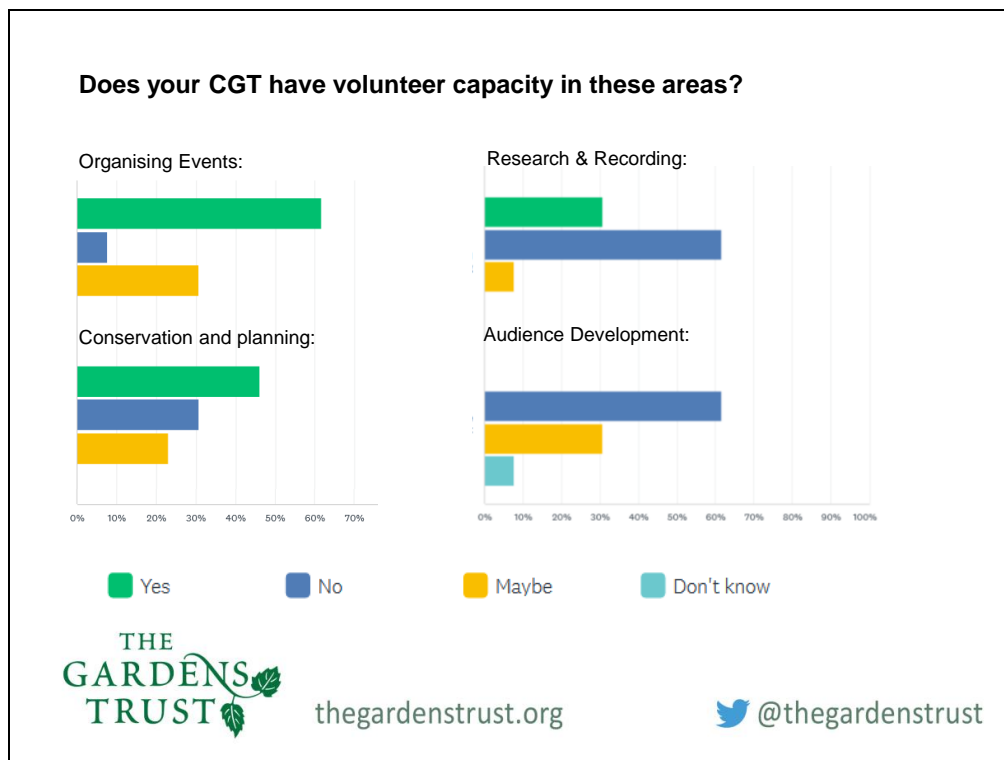
Workshop at Highbury Hall, Birmingham, 11th October 2022.

Thank you coming today. It's so lovely to be back in an actual room with you all, for the first time in nearly 3 years!

For those of you who haven't met us before, Sally and I are Volunteer Support Officers at the Gardens Trust. We were formerly known as Historic Landscape Project Officers, now the HLP has been replaced by a two-year project called Volunteers Save Space! which is partly funded by Historic England.

We will continue to train and support CGTs but are also broadening our reach to engage with and train new volunteers, especially those already connected with public parks. We'll be working with CGTs on 3 regional activities for engaging with new volunteers and, nationally, we're liaising with parks' Friends groups and other park users, to encourage them to learn more about the history of and threats faced by historic designed landscapes and to link up with the CGTs. All these activities will help to bring in new support for historic parks and gardens, and new audiences, and we hope, volunteers for CGTs. Therefore, we'll be working with the CGTs, at sessions like these, to help you get ready to receive them.

So, why are we here today? Most CGTs find that most of their members have joined in order to enjoy seeing and learning about gardens. Understandably, very few have the time or energy to commit to active volunteering, which is essentially unpaid work, and even CGTs with many members struggle to find volunteers.



Our last CGT survey, in Feb this year (2022), showed that the majority of CGTs feel they don't have enough volunteers, or that they're worried about succession and keeping pots filled.

Perhaps you can relate to some of these quotes from the survey?

- There are never enough active volunteers
- We have a dwindling number of trustees due to age and other commitments
- The same 6 officers undertake all these functions

And the pandemic hasn't helped

69% of CGTs are now concerned about their ability to continue their aims and activities in the near future.

Today's Workshop



Presentations and discussion:

- Why do volunteers volunteer?
- How do we find new volunteers?

Afternoon:

- How do we maintain volunteers?
- Highbury Hall history and garden tour



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So, how do we find active volunteers like this merry bunch who came to one of our planning training sessions in Yorkshire?

The structure of today's session – you can see from your programme

- Why do volunteers volunteer?
- How do we find new volunteers?
- Lunch
- How do we maintain volunteers?
- Highbury Hall history and garden tour

The accumulated experience of everyone in this room will be much greater than the information Sally and I are presenting today, so please take our slides largely as prompts to hear about your experiences. We'll have three discussion sessions, but please also feel free to make comments or ask questions whenever you like.



What do we mean by a 'volunteer' ?

a person who freely offers to take part in an enterprise or undertake a task

a person who works for an organization without being paid.

What roles do volunteers play in county garden trusts?

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Before we begin to talk about finding volunteers, I wanted to start today by thinking about what volunteering actually means.

Here are two definitions for the word 'volunteer' that I found in the dictionary:

'a person who freely offers to take part in an enterprise or undertake a task'

'a person who works for an organization without being paid'

I think most people would say doing work for no money, so if we aren't receiving payment, we must be getting something in return and we can talk about that in a moment.

In the meantime, I wondered how many different ways we can come up with, that somebody could volunteer for a CGT? There are a lot of roles and tasks to fill.



Why do we volunteer?

Why do you volunteer for your county gardens trust?

- I volunteer for me
- I volunteer to help the organisation
- I volunteer for another reason

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I'd like us to think about why we, ourselves, volunteer for a CGT?

These are all the reasons you volunteered in the first place and why you are still volunteering now. For each reason write it on a different Post-it note.

I'm going to give you couple of minutes to think of as many reasons as you can. When you're ready bring up your Post-its to these 3 sheets of paper and decide which of these 3 categories each reason fits into.

The categories are:

'I volunteer for personal reasons'

'I volunteer to help the running of the CGT'

'I volunteer for another reason'

Volunteers and Heritage

The heritage sector has a tradition of working with and supporting volunteers.

5.5% of the adult population that volunteer in England have undertaken some volunteering activity in heritage, from formal roles in heritage trusts and boards, to informal support promoting and sharing local history and heritage.

Heritage volunteering can improve quality of life by offering social and economic benefits for participants and can also support wider social cohesion.

(Source: Historic England, 'Heritage and Society 2020')



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It is not just us who have been thinking about why we volunteer and the benefits of volunteering.

Here are some findings by Historic England, that were published in their Heritage and Society 2020 paper, published as a response to the concerns arising from the pandemic. 5.5% of the adult population is a sizeable proportion of people who volunteer in some capacity in heritage organisations and projects. Our heritage needs volunteers, which is something our county garden trusts know all too well, and we can all think of ways in which our volunteers can help protect our historic park and garden landscapes.

The last sentence summarises the well-being and personal benefits arising from volunteering and here are some results from HE's targeted research . . .

Heritage volunteering can improve wider quality of life, offering social and economic benefits for participants.

An evaluation of the Inspiring Futures project – a training and volunteering programme across ten heritage venues in Greater Manchester found that:

- **75%** of volunteers reported a significant increase in wellbeing after a year
- **60%** reported sustained wellbeing over 2-3 years
- **30%** of volunteers found employment or other opportunities for getting into work
- **90%** of volunteers reported benefits from socialising with others, while **35%** sustained friendships outside of the organisation

(Source: Historic England, 'Heritage and Society 2020')



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There are some high percentages on this list which is borne out by all the amazing work that CGT volunteers do for their Trusts.

The feeling worth and doing something important is an overriding factor and the social aspects of volunteering are incredibly important. We would all give testament to this, but it is good to see it in black and white from an organisation such as Historic England.



Volunteering is good for us!

People with a wider social circle of support are considered 50% less prone to physical health risks associated with loneliness (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010)

For every £1 invested, approximately £3.50 of social and economic return was generated (Envoy Partnership, 2017)



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So, there it is, volunteering is good for us!

It keeps us active in both body and mind, as a social species it keeps us feeling connected with others and on top of that volunteers can play a really important part in protecting our heritage and give very good value in monetary terms! It is important that CGTs are transmitting these messages if we want to encourage others to volunteer.

How do we find new volunteers?



1. **Who** are you looking for?

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We will now give a short presentation on how to find new volunteers, concentrating on

- Who exactly you're looking for
- Specific places to look for those people
- And how to draw them in, once you've found them.

We'll then divide you into groups and ask you to write some notes about how your CGT tackles these. We can then share our thoughts with the whole group.

So, rather than just looking generally for 'new volunteers', it's useful to ask yourself who exactly are you looking for?

Who are you looking for?

- Everyone? Are you sure?
- Good basic skillset – reliable, honest, friendly
- What other skills do they need for the posts you want to fill?



Social Media Volunteer?

Public Engagement?

Planning Volunteer?

Treasurer?

Trustee?

Researcher?



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Whilst it would be lovely to throw open volunteering opportunities to everyone, it's probably better to strive for a good basic skillset – e.g., the need to be reliable, honest and friendly, and then what other particular skills or experience you need them to have, to fulfil the role you have in mind.

For example:

- If you want a social media volunteer, perhaps approach media studies graduates as Frankie has done for the GT. She approached the UEA Media Course looking for help with our outreach, looking for someone who not only has the skills but also enjoys engaging with others.
- If you want a planning vol you need someone with a bit of experience and time – perhaps a retired planner or conservation officer.
- Treasurer? – someone trustworthy and organised. They don't have to be a retired accountant but someone with experience of keeping financial records for another organisation or has taught maths, could help?
- Public engagement – good speaking skills and empathy
- Research & Recording – a good team player is great, but they also need to be happy to work independently

None of these roles really need someone to already have a particular interest in garden history if they do, it's a bonus!

Recruiting Trustees is particularly important. They will need to be honest, reliable, hopefully have some good ideas for taking the trust forward and be able to commit a reasonable amount of time to meetings etc.

What would you like them to do?

- Don't be too broad
- Break down into specific jobs, matching skills to tasks
- Make roles really clear
- Include small roles

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graph LR; A["We need volunteers!"] --> B["We need a social media volunteer"]; B --> C["Role description: write content for Facebook; work with us on a content calendar; respond to direct messages"]
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What do you want them to do?

Don't just advertise for volunteers. If you're too broad, e.g. "Come and volunteer for us!", people will be uncertain as to whether they're suitable for the role.

- Break down into specific jobs and make roles really clear
- matching skills to tasks (for both skilled and unskilled people)
- write a volunteer role description detailing exactly what's required. Do any of you use these? Could you share an example?
- Include small roles, such as someone to photograph events, someone to upload your research reports onto a database, etc. these will be attractive to people with less time to spare.
- Once you've worked out who you really want and what skills they need, this will help you decide where to look.

How do we find new volunteers?

2. *Where do we find them?*



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Once we have decided what volunteers we need, we then have to think about the best way to find them. Do we anticipate finding them amongst our existing CGT members or do we need to look elsewhere?

Let's first think about our existing CGT members.



This sounds a simple solution, and in an ideal world we would put a note out to our memberships and volunteers would be falling over themselves to get involved – we all know that this will only be a lovely dream!

Would I be right in saying that the majority of our members are there for social reasons, to meet up with people at exciting talks and even better, get to see lovely gardens or rolling estates and eat cake? As far as they are concerned, they are supporting your events, and your research and conservation activities, all of which they think are being carried out by people with more knowledge than them, more time than them and are already doing a great job. I know. I was one of those CGT members until our Norfolk AGM in 2013 when the committee made it very clear that the Trust was going to cease to run efficiently with too few people trying to do too many jobs.

So how can we use our members to find the people we want?

How well do you know your members?

- Know them very well
- Know them a little
- Know nothing at all about them

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This seems a simple question, but they probably fall into 3 categories.

1. You will know some of your members very well either because of years you've all spent at your Trust or maybe you know them from outside – work colleagues, neighbours, parents from school, family etc. These are the people we often ask outright to volunteer and hope they don't say no, mainly because we wouldn't ask them to volunteer for something we know they don't have the time, skills or suitability for.

2. Then there are the people we know a bit, or we know them through other people – these people can be very useful as you may know what their backgrounds are, or other organisations they already volunteer for. Our current Chairman was the Chair of the Norfolk Archaeology Society and when we heard he was going to step down from that role we approached him to come on board to run our meetings and organise the committee.

3. Then there are the members you don't know anything about, apart from their names, addresses and email addresses. They may have been to a few events but they haven't yet registered on your radar.

With all these groups of members, you could form a volunteer group to help out in small ways with visits and talks – giving an hour or so for helping with refreshments, parking, taking money, manning a stand etc. Nothing too time consuming but with a free entrance ticket to say thank you. Your events coordinator and committee will then get to know them and identify people who might be good for other roles or even take over as events coordinator in time. Building in succession planning by giving some members experience works well.



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This is an idea that Norfolk 'borrowed' from Sussex GT and tried for the first time this summer – namely a new members' afternoon.

For this first event we decided to invite all the people who had joined since the start of 2020 and our secretary kindly offered to host it in his garden. It is a modest-sized city garden, which unfolds as you climb a hill to reveal this wonderful view, but on this occasion the garden was playing second fiddle.

The new members benefitted from a free garden visit, and drink, and 45 of them took up the offer, so we decided to split them over 2 afternoons. The benefit for us was that as many of the committee members who could attend spent a pleasant afternoon getting to know them and our chairman gave a short speech about what the Trust does, who the committee members were and what they did. We were all wearing large name stickers too. From the afternoon I was at, we identified 3 people with a bit of historical or conservation knowledge, and secretarial skills – all in the 40 – 65 age bracket. Not only is it very useful to have those names tucked away for future use but the new members not only got to know us but each other too – it really helps at events if new people at least recognise some other faces.

Other ways current members can help with finding volunteers

- Ask them specifically to think of people they know with a certain set of skills
- Do they know of a professional who might have some spare time or is coming up to retirement?
- Do they have family members who could use volunteering experience to bolster up a CV?



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Your membership is a vast vat of knowledge and connections.

The members themselves will know of suitable people for the roles you have in mind, but they need precise information before they can ask potential volunteers and we will be talking about that in more detail in a minute.

Many people have their retirement plans mapped out before they get near the day in question, but many others are worried that they will be left with nothing to do and so approaching them before they find other things to do is vital. Norfolk GT's events coordinator started working part time, when approaching her retirement, in her role as a headmaster's PA. This is when we asked her to be our new volunteer in this role.

Young people! Every CGT mentions at some time or other that they need younger people to join them and/or help out. Particularly roles that might involve technology or social media or helping with events where they need public engagement skills. CGT members have families and friends who might have a younger person who would like some work experience to add to their CV or to volunteer in a role that would help them learn new skills or develop their confidence.

Where do we find new volunteers from outside our CGT?

- Volunteer Forums
- Local Council Officers & other professionals
- Other Organisations
- Advertising on Social Media, Radio & Press incl.
GT website: <https://thegardenstrust.org/conservation/volunteer-roles/>
- Local Sixth Forms, Colleges and Universities



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Where do we find new volunteers outside of our CGTs? Here are some ideas (and we think you will have more ideas to add).

Starting with local Volunteer Forums, where a huge range of volunteering opportunities are advertised and they have a wide reach across your county, so you may need to specify that people can drive, or the role will be home-based or focussed in a certain area. Also, mention desirable skills and for some roles proof of previous experience and maybe references will be required.

For planning and conservation roles, if you don't already know your local planning officers and conservation officers, then please do find a way. While they are still in post, they won't be able to comment much or write responses, however if you know they are coming up to retirement age, then is the time to approach them. If you can have a small group of willing volunteers to assist all the better, they won't feel overwhelmed, or some might lack garden history knowledge that others can fill in.

For research roles, look around at county history, or archaeological groups, archive centre volunteers, town and village history societies and family history societies. These people are not fazed by researching and have the confidence to learn new skills or subject matters. The new Suffolk's Unforgettable Gardens Story project was launched last month we sent out launch event invitations to Chairs and Secretaries of many local history groups as well as the other organisations I have mentioned above. OK, so they didn't all engage but a lady who is the Chair of the Suffolk Local Recorders Scheme came along and said she can send out requests for help with certain sites, in their newsletter and to affiliated local groups.

Another lady from West Suffolk came forward to say she would be interested in starting a group in that area, which is an area very underrepresented by members of SGT.

If you have a particularly difficult post to fill, it may be worth writing a piece for your local paper or approaching your local radio station – all coverage is good and it highlights your CGT, what you are doing and the post you need help with. Turn it into a story if you can, so that someone could see themselves fitting into your organisation and what a worthwhile cause it is to support. Social media reaches people way outside your normal audience, so if you already have a social media presence, it's worth a try, especially if it is a role that would suit a younger person (Twitter and Instagram, or if you are feeling brave a Tik Tok video!) The GT now has a page on our website where you can advertise for particular role, contact Tamsin and Sally if you want to advertise on here.

Lastly, again if you are looking for younger people to help with specific roles we've just mentioned, Sixth Forms, Colleges and Universities are a hunting ground for you. No matter what brilliant ideas we have for social media posts, they can come up with things from a different perspective which will appeal to a younger audience. Maybe you have a volunteer role that would be appropriate for the service section of Duke of Edinburgh. Ask the educational establishments if they can put you in touch with the teacher who organises D of E.

How do we find new volunteers?



3. How to draw them in

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The idea of dangling a carrot on a stick is obviously a bit crass, but you do need to give new volunteers an enticing reason to join you.

How to draw volunteers in to your organisation

Clear messaging about your aims, activities and volunteer experience



After you've gone out looking for volunteers, and have got their attention, you need to feed their interest by helping them to understand what your CGT is all about.

Most immediately, via messages on your website and social media, summarise your aims and try and show the variety of activities you undertake, not just the most popular visits and talks

Also talk about your existing volunteers and how they are finding their experience – maybe some short quotes or video clips?

Here we have two examples – on the left, from Norfolk GT, a short summary of their aims and membership benefits.

On the right, an example from Notts GT, showing volunteers of mixed ages doing some practical conservation work.

How to draw volunteers in to your organisation

What can you offer?



New skills



Social



Perks!



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Next, it's useful to spell out what you can offer to volunteers. This might include:

- Learning new skills, such as learning how to use an archive, and how to do field survey, understanding conservation issues; or demonstrating responsibility, e.g., being a Trustee. Some of these might help them in other parts of their lives and careers
- A feeling of satisfaction from doing something worthwhile
- The social side – spending time with like-minded people is an incredibly important part of CGT membership and volunteering
- Rewards for volunteers only – perhaps some events open to them but not the general membership, or discounted offers for volunteers.
- There might be other, little perks, e.g. members of Hampshire GT might relish the chance to meet their President, Alan Titchmarsh!

You can communicate all of this to potential new volunteers via volunteer onboarding...



Onboarding is just a fancy term for volunteer interviews. A chance for you and your potential volunteer to get to know one-another and can be as relaxed as going for a coffee or walk with them to:

- Explain the role and the positives described in the previous slide
- Find out why they were motivated to apply
- Make sure they are suitable – right base level of skills, personable,
- Think about safeguarding too – are they suitable to engage with young people/families/vulnerable adults (a DBS [Disclosure and Barring Service] check would be vital for this sort of engagement) These extra steps will not put off the right people and make the right ones feel they're working with a good organisation.
- Together you can discuss how the role is currently done and if improvements could be made. They may have some relevant previous experience which could feed into this.

We would now like you to discuss in your small groups ways in which your CGT has carried out the following:

- Who you are looking for (either now or in past) and the skills needed for that role
- Places you have looked to recruit volunteers
- How you've drawn them in and encouraged them to actually sign up.



How do we maintain our CGT volunteers?

1. Post-recruitment stage








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So, you have been successful, you have identified a new person and they have agreed to consider volunteering in a role – what's next?

We have already heard how important it is that you have thought about what the volunteer role involves before you go looking for people. When someone first starts it is crucial that they begin their role as soon as possible and quickly feel that their time is going to be productive and valued. If too long a gap appears at this stage, you could well lose them to another organisation that appears more organised!

Do you have any kind of written description of what a voluntary role entails to give to new volunteers?



Volunteer role description

The National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) recommends that a Voluntary Role Description should:

- give volunteers more information than you can give in person
- allow them to compare a role with their skills and expectations
- help you measure their performance
- help others understand how the role applies to theirs.

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A volunteer description might be in order if the role is central to the running of the CGT, for example the conservation officer, treasurer, secretary or membership secretary. It should list what the volunteer is expected to do and how their role links in with other people. Also, list the main aims of your CGT should be on there, so they know from the start how you want the public to perceive your trust and what it stands for. You may want to put some outcomes in there too, so you can see how they are performing, and they know where they are heading.

Many voluntary roles will have a time limit – whether it's a project with a definite end time or goal, or a committee post might be for a set number of years – people are more likely to volunteer if they know there's an end. They can always volunteer for something else, if they enjoy working with your CGT so much, when the current role finishes!

Voluntary Role Description v Job Description

Volunteer role descriptions can look a lot like job descriptions. They are not. Instead, they describe unpaid roles and should only describe expectations of a role.

You must be careful not to imply a volunteer is under contract to perform specific tasks. If it looks like you treat them as an employee, they may be eligible for full employment rights. You could also find yourself in breach of employment law.



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A Volunteer Role description may look and sound a bit like a job description, but it is not because it is not a contract – this extract is from the National Council of Voluntary Organisations' website.



Meeting other key members of your committee or council



Find out what their skill set is and what they initial help or training they might need


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When a new volunteer comes forward what else can we do to make sure they get off to good start?

Find opportunities to meet up with other volunteers or committee members - working in isolation is not what most people sign up for as we have discussed earlier. It's encouraging to see other people who are volunteering and hearing what they get out of it. You could invite the new person along to a committee meeting, if appropriate to their role, as an observer.

Take time to find out what they are confident about and what gaps they have in their knowledge or experience. An efficient administrator may need some tuition with an unfamiliar mailing system or website programme. Planning and research volunteers may need full or partial training depending on their experience – GT runs this from time to time and materials are available on our Resource Hub.



A trustee role might require special training or at least a written outline of what your Trust stands for and its principle aims and objectives. People being unaware and going off-message can cause problems down the line.



Have an overlap period with existing volunteer

Do they have suggestions for how the role might be carried out?

Assign a mentor or buddy

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For the more complex roles, encourage the existing post holder to work alongside the new volunteer until they feel confident enough to take over completely. Membership secretary, treasurer and planning officers probably come under this category.

Just because a system has worked well with a previous volunteer doesn't mean it can't be done just as well in a different manner. It's important that volunteers feel they 'own' the job. e.g., banking methods or booking tickets for events.

Have your new researchers got a coordinator they can ask for help or to share their findings with? Do new committee members feel able to raise concerns with the Chair or Vice-Chair? Who's the best person to ask information about a particular site in one area of your county if you are trying to write planning response? For the occasional big jobs like envelope stuffing or collection of money at events – who can be called upon to be a second pair of hands? If voluntary roles are too time-consuming or carry too much responsibility, it is likely that the volunteer won't last long.



If new volunteers, feel confident and well supported in their roles, they are much more likely to be working with you for the length of a project or even a number of years in a committee post.

And . . . happy volunteers spread the word amongst your CGT members, which leads to more people likely to volunteer in the future.

How do we maintain our CGT volunteers?

2. Long-term contentment



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After this period of welcome and settling-in, how can we continue to make sure that our volunteers are happy in their roles?

We need to make sure they feel valued, satisfied by their voluntary role and well supported in it.

Satisfaction?

- Boredom, especially in repetitive roles
- Stress
- Ineffective methods



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Let's now have a quick look at what can go wrong, and how we can ensure that that volunteers find long-term enjoyment in their work.

After volunteers have had a chance to get used to their roles, they may well start to identify aspects which aren't working for them, for example:

- Boredom or unhappiness may set in, after long periods of working in some of the more repetitive or less exciting roles, e.g., treasurer, events organiser
- Some roles can be stressful, e.g., planning response volunteers can become overloaded with work and also feel a weight of responsibility for having to make decisions which influence other people.
- Sometimes volunteers may also end up working in isolation and feel lonely, overlooked and unsure that they are doing things in the right way.
- There could be a clash of personalities or a falling out between volunteers, often over something quite trivial.





Therefore, it is so important that there is clear channel of communication for every volunteer with appropriate committee members and/or Chairman.


Ask volunteers if they can see a way to improve their role, in a way that still works for your Trust.

Perhaps they'd even like to try another position in your Trust, and if they're good volunteers and you don't want to lose them, it's worth trying to move them around, into something they'd really enjoy.


Support

- Support structure in place
- Share the load – working groups
- Connect with others
- Don't forget practical/financial support





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A Volunteer Role Description should make it clear who to go to for support if any problems arise.

Set up regular chats with your volunteers. For example, do your planning volunteers have a system for chatting through any tricky cases they're not sure about?

Discuss any issues with your committee, if appropriate.

Share the load, so that volunteers don't feel alone or overworked, and work together in small groups to share responsibilities.

Connect them to the other CGTs to share and obtain knowledge, they don't necessarily have to start a new role from scratch if someone else has already worked out a good way to do it. Encourage them to attend GT meet ups and training days or webinars. They could sign up to the GT Slack account where people chat and ask questions to others in the group.

Don't forget that practical or financial support may also be required, to help volunteers fully participate. E.g., not everyone has a car – ask if they need lift sharing to visit a site. With rising cost of living, travel costs should be offered, if you can. Do you have a volunteer expenses policy, so that there is no embarrassment about asking for help to cover costs?

Feeling valued

- Regular check-ins with key committee members
- Small but regular treats/socialising
- Celebrating volunteers










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Newly recruited volunteers should meet the chair and key committee members, but these check-ins should continue through the life of the volunteer role. This should be an opportunity for committee members to reiterate how important the volunteer's work is and for the volunteer to say what is and isn't working for them.

In addition, volunteers may appreciate being treated to occasional social events, as a thank you for their work and a chance to catch up with other volunteers in their organisation. This could be something as small as a meet up for coffee, or an annual lunch, or a free visit to a lovely garden.

And lastly, celebrating volunteers. We all appreciate recognition for the work we do as volunteers. It has a real and lasting value to both landscapes and people. There are lots of ways you could celebrate your volunteers. Perhaps writing short pieces about them in your newsletters, websites and social media. Let us at the GT know what a fantastic job they have been doing so we can celebrate them too in our communications! You might want to mention them by name in your minutes and Charities Commission report, if they have been instrumental in achieving a success for your CGT?

And you can join in with national celebrations, such as the GT's volunteering awards and Volunteers' week (beginning of June). The latter gives a chance to get much greater, national social media exposure for your volunteers.

Departure

- Accept that volunteering period is finite
- Create some short-term roles
- Enjoyable leaving process



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Of course, volunteers won't stick around for ever – volunteer engagement tends to taper off naturally and it's good to bear this in mind in order to manage everyone's expectations without any resentment forming later. Your constitution may even state that some committee roles, usually Trustees, should be for a set number of years only. This forces you to think about succession on a regular basis and means you'll be regularly on the lookout for new helpers.

It might even be more attractive to volunteers if some roles are very specific and only run for a few weeks or months – perhaps helping with research for a themed project, or setting up a website?

Finally, it's useful to plan a 'enjoyable' leaving process which recognises the commitment each volunteer has made. You could mark the occasion with a gesture, e.g., free life membership, a gift/vouchers, a Chair's note of thanks (personal and in your CGT newsletter or magazine) or perhaps even a certificate which could contribute to their career development.

**How do we
maintain our
CGT volunteers?**

Your experience:

- maintaining job satisfaction
- support systems
- valuing and celebrating volunteers
- leaving process



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We would now like to discuss how you celebrate and maintain your CGT volunteers.
How has your volunteering been valued and marked and how did it make you feel?

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Thank you all for coming today and thank you for all the brilliant work you do volunteering for your county garden trust. We hope that we have given you some ideas to take away and discuss with your committees, and that you find brilliant new volunteers to help run your CGTs, conduct research and assist at your events.